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RHAPSODY

BY

ALFRED HITCH

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—BY—

ALFRED HITCH

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Here you will find no finished picture,
Nor yet a rounded thought will meet;
For like my life, the best is wanting,
And all is vague and incomplete.

A little book of verses,
Without restraint or rule,—
Too small for criticism,
Too good for ridicule.

It will not be a failure,
Though it does not succeed:
We cannot fail beyond the
Endeavor of the deed.

PART I.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE TYRANTS OF THE EARTH.

Destruction waits upon our steps
In all our ways and roads,
'Mong weak inhabitants of earth
That dwell in frail abodes.

We beat or kill, for food or fun,
All other life on earth:
If to be brutal makes the brute,
Why claim a higher birth?

Flesh is flesh and blood is blood,
What'er the lineament:
Though life and life may differ, yet
They are not different.

We kill our brother in the brute—
We kill our brother, then
Sit down to eat his flesh, and ask
The grace of God. Amen.

NOVEMBER.

November comes with sullen mood,
And takes from life its green defense;
And now begins, in field and wood,
The slaughter of the innocents.

Man feels the savage in him stir,
An instinct deeper than his race
Impels him forth to run with hounds,
And follow in the cruel chase.

Man, ere he had to manhood grown,
A beast in forests long ago,
Took other life to save his own,
And lived upon the hunt; but now,

No longer hunts for food or place,
Yet with his dog he follows still
The fierce excitement of the chase,
The bloody pleasure of the kill.

THE ANSWER.

I sat and read in books all day
The hist'ry of many a bloody fray;

And as I read, age followed age
In quick succession down the page,
And merged at length into the whole.

Then tired, I sought the window seat
That overlooks a city street,
And watched the hurrying crowd go by,
And mused the while, until my soul
Seemed dead within me, and I cried,
"What is this life force? what am I?"
The soul within my soul replied:
"The restless spirit of the earth
That groans and travails unto birth;
Deep in elemental night,
A blind god yearning toward the light."

THE NUMBER TWO.

Life is a balance 'twixt this and that,
And hangs itself in balance with death;
Life is a see-saw, the world is too,
The poise is a moment, it moves at a breath.

The Number Two is the riddle of the Sphinx,
That man always is finding and never has found:
In the magnet is hidden the secret of sex,
And the meaning of motion, power and sound.

THE TWO SIDES.

'Tis well, I know, and right, indeed,
To side with party and to lean,
To fight for nation, hold to creed,—
And yet how little and how mean!

Alas! he wrongs himself who fights
In any cause less than the whole;
For though the cause seem just and right,
He thereby loses half his soul.

"'TIS SAID THAT IN DEATH MAN WILL WAKE INTO LIFE."

'Tis said that in death man will wake into life,
In a beautiful country forever will dwell;
But I fear that vile man its rich beauty will mar,
For earth was a heaven till man made it hell.

TO HELEN KELLER.

Closed to the day, thine eyes behold the night
And stars beyond our ken. No earthly sound doth mar

Thy life-long dream that fills thee with delight,
And glows upon thy face. And we are far
From thee, but thou art near, for undeterred,
Thou'st learned our books who first had to learn how;
And better hast thou learned than we, for thou
Hast *felt* where we have only seen or heard.

Dream on, dream on, deep in the tranquil shade,
Beyond the gaudy day, where life doth run
To folly, fret and fact. Defect hath made
Thee perfect, and thy stars outshine the sun.

TO WILLIAM WATSON.

Thou spoken thought of my dumb soul—
  Artist in every line—
The world is waiting for its poet,
  But Watson, thou art mine.

I turn from the voluminous past,
  Big with unwinnowed words,
From the dead cry of yesterday,
  Furled flags and broken swords,—

Turn to the present and to thee,
  To art artistic grown,
To modern thought and modern pain,
  And find myself at home.

AN INVOCATION TO MATERNITY.

O Father, Mother, guard it well, the life ye gave:
Ye are as gods to kill or make alive;

Within your hands the helpless future lies—
O guide and save!

O Father, Mother, is it well, the life ye gave;
Maimed and wronged, a shame and a reproach?
Have the unborn no rights?
Shall mind ne'er enter in the making of the mind,
But only blind and senseless lust?

O Father, Mother, of the child,
Be father, mother, to the youth:
Youth is the danger stage of life;
The errors of the youth will chase him to the grave:
A deed once done can never be recalled,
Nor one false step be rectified.

O Father, Mother, guard it well, the life ye gave:
Ye are as gods to kill or make alive;
Within your hands the helpless future lies—
O guide and save!

ROCK-A-BY BABY.

Infant asleep in the cradle,
I sit and wonder what thou art sleeping to—
Plain man or god, leader or led,
One in a million or the million,—
Whether a self-important man of affairs,
Clear-headed, cool and capable,
Or else a shrinking, cringing vagabond,
And through long dreary years hang lank
Along the crowded ways of life.

Perhaps thou wilt live a drunkard, masturbater or
opium-eater,
Fast bound by the chains of habit
In a burning hell of remorse.

O where or what is thy fatal defect,
Thy tendon of Achilles?
Is it a hereditary taint in the blood,
To break forth into virulent corruption,
And make life loathsome?
Or else, and worse,
Some insignificant blotch upon the brain,
To slowly spread, grow with the growing man,
Till the whole mind is blurred and dulled and dead.

Whether thou art born to this or that, I know not,
But one thing I know—
That as thou wast born of thy parents' yearning,
Yea, of the yearning of ten thousand-thousand parents,
Yea, of ten thousand-thousand centuries,
Yea, of eternity,—
So thou shalt live and die, still yearning, vainly struggling,
Grasping the impalpable air in thy empty palms.

SORROW IS DUMB.

I strove my sorrow to express,
To sound the depths of deep distress,
To put my grief in wailing rhyme,
And build from woe a work sublime;
But strove in vain—my words were weak;
Sorrow is dumb—it cannot speak.

And though I searched the treasured hoards
Of sighing songs and weeping words,
My heart pronounced them poor and weak;
Sorrow is dumb—it cannot speak.

A TOAST.

Fill the cup with poison hemlock,
And drink with me to Woe;

For all else is but illusion,
And soon will fade and go.

Oh! this world is but a desert,
A very dreary land;
And our hope is but a fleeting
Mirage upon the sand.

See we luscious figs and olives,
And every fruit that's fair;
Ah! but when we go to pluck them
They vanish into air.

Happiness will flee to-morrow,
And Sorrow come again:
Come, and drink with me to Sorrow,
And all her ghastly train.

"A LIFE OF SORROW IN A WORLD OF WRONG."

A life of sorrow in a world of wrong,
Though lasting but a day, doth last too long—
Too long to weep, to struggle and fall;
For life is nothing if living is all.

O Star of my Life! descend to the West;
I am weary of action, and long to rest—

To sleep forever, forever to sleep,
In a tomb of the earth, or the caves of the deep.

"OH! MY HEART IS FILLED WITH SORROW."

Oh! my heart is filled with sorrow
That no human soul can share,
And to-day doth link to-morrow
In an endless chain of care.

How I long for home and freedom,
Love that never can be mine!
I have lived the life of others,
And my soul doth droop and pine.

"MY LIFE IS SPENT IN A FEVER"

My life is spent in a fever,
A struggle for power and wealth,
With a heart on fire with its passion,
And a mind at war with itself.

I would I could live without the
Vain things of the world's unrest,
And break the bonds of convention,
For the peace and ease of the breast—

Never again to be troubled
With a wish beyond my lot—
A life as careless as Nature,
A home in a sylvan grot.

But I know that my spirit will never,
O never will be at rest!
Till the long green grass and daisies
Are growing out of my breast.

"MY SOUL NO LONGER BROOD AND LANGUISH."

My soul, no longer brood and languish
Within the prison of the mind;
But go abroad and live with Nature,
And lose thyself in all mankind.

My heart, no more with vain repining
Profane the sacredness of grief,
When all the world is filled with sorrow,
And seeks, but cannot find relief.

"But there is no degree in sorrow,"
My heart made answer, "and of all
The many millions that have suffered,
None ever thought his sorrow small.

"And I am tired of life divided,—
To live, and only know of pain,
The loneliness of crowded cities,
The weariness of hill and plain;

"For as the dove the earth encircled,
When water covered all its face,
So through the weary world I wander,
Nor find I any resting place."

TIRED.

To another day of consuming toil,
I arise, unrested and worn,
To work 'neath the glare of the August sun.
In the fields of the ripening corn.

The sun goes up; the earth catches fire;
I stew in my sweat, and bake;
While the soul is numbed, and the mind is dulled,
And the tired limbs ache and ache.

The sickening smell of the rank, green corn
Adds nausea unto my pain,
As I wearily stoop from hill to hill,
While the hot world reels in my brain.

O life of interminable toilsome days,
And tired nights that last but an hour!

Let the strong and the wealthy join in thy praise—
I have neither the will nor the power.

TO A CHILD, CRYING.

Never fret about the morrow;
Take thy pleasure in to-day;
Why shouldst from December borrow
Frost to chill the buds of May?

Life is sweet in the beginning,
Clouded by no troubled past;
Yes, the spring of life is pleasant,
But it cannot always last.

Oh! enjoy youth while 'tis fleeting,
In thy glad, paternal home;
There is plenty time for weeping
In the years that are to come.

NON-FULFILLMENT.

The beautiful past that my childhood lived in
Is dead and deep buried in sorrow and sin.

O happy is he can complete, and can scan,
The dreams of the child in the deeds of the man!

A WALK IN THE NIGHT.

Come, O Love, and we'll walk abroad to-night,
And see the still world by the pale moonlight:
The rabble may walk when the sun is bright,
But we, my darling, will walk in the night.

We'll walk where the bat goes fluttering through
The fields that are damp with the falling dew,
And the stars look down, and shudder with fright,
At the shapes and sounds that live in the night.

Together we'll walk in the midnight gloom,
In the churchyard under the dying moon;
We'll walk up and down by the lone church tower;
We'll walk with the spirits in the midnight hour.

Come, O Love, and we'll walk down into the night,
And view the dead world by the dim starlight:
The rabble may walk in the broad daylight,
But we, my darling, will walk in the night.

LITERATURE.

I find myself, and joy to know it,
In the philosopher and poet.

I prize a jewel of the heart,
Digged forth by genius, shaped by art,
A novel phrase, a sentence brief,
That standeth out in bold relief,—
Wherein the master minds have wrought
The prodigality of thought.
In the economy of words.

I like to find a pearl below
The verses smooth and liquid flow,
Or else a subtle thought pursue
Its many devious windings through.

I love to dream in dim retreat
With sad Rossetti, morbid-sweet . . . . .
His dreams, like brilliant plumaged birds
Caught in a silken mesh of words;
Or swing down Swinburne's swinging verse
Past lovers pale with passions fierce,
Whose blessings turn into a curse;
Or from myself to step aside
To Shakespeare's world so wonderous wide,
And live a life intensified,—
To fight with warriors, reign with kings,
To love with lovers, be all things,—
To feel with Hamlet's sickly mood,
Or dream in Arden's fairy wood.

My days are spent and wasted quite,
From night to morn, from morn till night,
With men that never read nor write.
When sad and lonely, worn with strife,
And weary of a weary life,
Of foolish words and angry looks,
I turn for solace to my books:
Books are my friends, my child, my wife,
My love, my God, my all in life.

TO A MAIDEN AT PRAYER.

Pray on little maid who art lovely and fair,
And pure as the day of thy birth;
There is need of thy praying, if prayer can make less
The sorrow and sin of the earth.

I would gladly resign all the pleasures of life
For the prayers of thy sanctified breath,
And give the whole world for thy hope and thy faith
To sweeten the bitter of death.

"WHEN MISFORTUNE OVERTAKES US"

When misfortune overtakes us,
When consumed with grief or shame,

There is comfort in the thought that
Through another's fault it came;
But the sting to all our woes is
When we have ourselves to blame.

AN EPITAPH.

The day was long, his way was steep,
He being weary fell asleep;
And here beneath this quiet grass
He sleeps while ages onward pass—
He sleeps, he sleeps, he sleeps at last!

Upon his couch there falls no light;
There is no day—'tis always night;
No noise to break upon his ear;
No dreams disturb his slumber here—
He sleeps, he sleeps, he sleeps at last!

?

We read what men have 'complished
In all their labors joint,
And at the end we find an
Interrogation point.

"AS A THRUSH THAT SINGS IN THE HEDGE."

As a thrush that sings in the hedge,
  And dies ere its song is sung;
As a flower that blooms in the morn,
  And fades ere the day is done;—
So the maid with beautiful face
  Soon turns to a wrinkled dame;
So the voice of gladness and mirth
  Soon ends in a cry of pain.

ON THE RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM.

These rhymes are gray with age and wet with tears;
And yet we feel, in all their hopes and fears,
  That we are one with him who lived and died
Far in the dead and long forgotten years.

Long time he sought some certain truth to gain,
And finding not, he murmured, "All is vain:
  Live while we live is wisdom, for once dead,
Who knows that we shall ever live again?

"Denial and duty well become the priest,
But we will pluck the rose, sit at the feast,
And sweeten all our woes with love and wine;
Then Death may do its worst—we've lived at least."

This verse has outlived creeds, and still is new;
Though men have sought out many an interview
With Nature through the centuries, to-day
We know no more than Omar Khayyam knew.

Come, fill the cup, O Love, O Sweetheart mine!
With sweet and purple nectar of the vine,
And we will drink to Omar's memory—
Old Omar, oracle of love and wine.

HER.

I would not court the lily,
Nor with the angels roam:
Let flowers wed with flowers,
And heaven keep her own.

I love a maiden mortal,
Eve's latest daughter,
With all her mother's sin;
I love her faults and follies,
Her pimples and her freckles,
The mole upon her chin.

More than all else I love her—
The end of my desires;
I love her for a woman,
With tingling nerves of passion
Bequeathed me by my sires.

"I COME TO THEE, O MY DARLING!"

I come to thee, O my darling!
Faint with the longing of years,
Weak with unsatiate passion,
And burnt with its scalding tears.

I have come from the Town of Ambition,
Through the Wood of the Heart-Sick Dove,
To dream in the Temple of Beauty,
And feed on the lilies of love.

"UPON THE EARTH THAT HOLDS THEE NOW."

Upon the earth that holds thee now,
Or in the heavens above,
There's naught so beautiful as thou,
And naught so sweet as love.

ALL FOR LOVE.

We love with all the yearning
  Our fruitless years have seen;
And we'll not blush to own it,
  Though one doth stand between.

Though Love forswear the altar
  To please the heart within,
We know that Love is holy,
  For Nature cannot sin.

Fear shall not make us timid,
  Nor Shame sit at our feast:
We know that love is love still,
  Though love without a priest.

Our lives are twined together
  As strong and fast as fate;
For love is more than marriage—
  It binds, and naught can break.

We'll love through joy and sorrow
  (True love is never done),
And kiss and cling together
  Till love shall make us one.

"HOLD ME FAST, LOVE, HOLD ME FAST!"

The world grows chill and overcast:
  Hold me fast, Love, hold me fast!
Say not farewell, but hold me fast,
Lest Death be lord of Love at last:
  Hold me fast, Love, hold me fast!

The ground is frozen hard and white—
  Hold me tight, Love, hold me tight!—
The wind is howling through the night;
Thou art fading from my sight:
  Hold me tight, Love, hold me tight!

I know that in the coffin chest—
  Hold me, press me to thy breast!—
I can never, never rest
Except thou fold me to thy breast:
  Clasp me, fold me to thy breast!

'Tis meet that lovers, you and I—
  Hold me tight, Love, hold me tight!—
Together live, together die,
And side by side forever lie:
  Hold me tight, Love, hold me tight!

SECTS.

They have bound and imprisoned universal God,
And left the world in the lurch;
They have squeezed the Bible into a creed,
And locked it up in a church.

Their church is sort of a social club,
For rhetoric and music made,
Where men and women on Sundays may meet
In a sanctified dress parade.

SMITHFIELD.

In the name of him who died
Upon Mount Calvary,
The Christian shed his brother's blood,
And throttled Liberty.

The man that suffered on the rack
And he that bound him down,—
Each followed duty and the right—
How shall God know his own?

The fires of Smithfield burn no more;
The Devil is not well,

And soon his heart will melt in tears
And quench the fires of Hell.

JOSEPH W. FOLK.

The country's robbed: we honest men
  Pass by and make no sign,
And by our silence we become
  Accessories to the crime.

But now there comes an honest man
  That fights dishonesty,
A man that loves his country more
  Than his security.

He comes to usher in that time
  (Alas! he cometh late)
When honest men no more neglect
  Their duty to the state.

The Church doth hold for future use
  The present and the real;
And while the Christian kneels in prayer
  The thieves break through and steal.

Let's live to-day, and for to-day,
  Live for our country and our homes;
And if to-morrow comes, why then,
  We'll live to-morrow when it comes.

THE DEAD BOSS.

(M. S. QUAY: OBIIT 1904.)

The boss is dead!
Office seekers,
Henchmen and heelers,
Bow the head,
And mourn your loss;
For the boss is dead,
The great, great boss.

He was a great man in a small way—
He robbed the people, and won their applause,
And ruled a whole state as his own.
He was a great man in a small way—
His heart ne'er thrilled to a noble cause,
And he lived for power alone.

Henchmen and heelers! pass on before
The gilded casket, where the dead boss lies.
He worked for you, but his work is o'er:
Then mourn and weep,—
Weep, weep, weep,—
And bury him deep,—
Deep, deep, deep—
So deep that his spirit shall never arise
To trouble the world any more.

SOLD.

Though its badge was an eagle, the party must own it
Was the dollar that won, not the eagle upon it.
Old Addicks bought it, you know very well,
So who shall question his right to sell,
Or do as he please with the thing he bought?

The sovereign people, the young and the gray,
All marched to the poles on election day,
And voted their liberty clean away.
For a rake-off advanced, they sold him the right
To stab in the back and plunder at night.

They were bought and sold like hogs on the drive,
A white man for ten and a nigger for five;
Wheedled and driven and cheated and sold:
He bought them with silver to sell them for gold.
In selling themselves they surely were *sold*,—
Sold, sold, sold!

Del., Nov., 1902.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF J. EDWARD ADDICKS.

The people cry against me—
I am the man successful,

They are the ones that fail:
I took ten million dollars
Out of the people's pockets,
And never went to jail.

My friends are bought and paid for,—
The friends of my good money
Unto the money's end.
If you want friends, go buy them,
But always buy on credit,
And never strike a balance,
If you would keep a friend.

The people call me rascal:
Now who's the biggest rascal,
The people, sir, or I?
I've bought their votes by thousands,
But if they would not sell them,
I surely could not buy

Who buys their suffrage is, sir,
As much as he that does not,
The creature of their grace;
The people are their rulers;
They make their kings and tyrants,
And hold them in their place.

I claim that life is like to
A game of whist or poker,

And I have won the game;
I've won by tricks and bluffing;
The people cry from envy—
They all would do the same.

THE PLEA OF THE FILIPINO.

By that liberty ye treasure,
We thy mercy do entreat:
Though we be but "beast" or "savage,"
Liberty is not less sweet.

Truth has written, blood has sealed it,
"Liberty is for the brave:"
Think ye that we fought the Spaniard
To become the Yankee's slave?

Ye have tak'n your strength for justice,
And our weakness for a fault,
So our pleading will not save us—
Only strength can make thee halt.

Ye are tyrants when abroad
Who are patriots at home;
But the ages shall avenge us—
Caesar's on the march to Rome.

In the marble halls of Empire
  Beasts of terror lie in wait;
If you share the Roman's grandeur,
  Ye must share the Roman's fate.

TO THE CZAR.

Thou wast Czar of the people
When people were children,
  But chilhood is past;
By bounds, and with leaping,
The people are growing
  To manhood at last.

Stand down, O tyrant!
Make room for the people!
  They have come to their own—
They have come through ages
Of dearth and oppression,
  With many a groan.

Bow down to the people,
And give, ere they take it,
  Thy forfeited rule!
Why stubbornly and blindly
Oppose the inevitable,
  And die like a fool?

What damnable folly
To dam an ocean
Of human souls!
The stronger you dam it,
The greater destruction
Will crush and o'erwhelm thee
As onward it rolls.

THE BUSINESS MAN.

His life consists of dollars and cents,
Of bacon and beans, or his stock in trade:
He has burdened the land with leases and rents,
And girdled the world with a barbed wire fence.

He has emptied his life of its soul and dream
(His art practical, his science applied),
And made the object of living to mean
Just buying and selling, or working a scheme.

A FIELD OF GRAIN.

From the windows of a train
Gleamed a field of ripening grain,
Turning golden in the sun
For the harvest soon to come.

Thought a broker in this strain,
As he glanced from moving train:
"Crops look good, and price is tall;
I will gamble on a fall."

Spoke a merchant on this wise,
While with calculating eyes,
Viewed the grain; "This field, I wis,
Means a thousand barrels of grist."

Mused a poet on the scene,
Far away as in a dream;
Saw he only beauty there,
Ripening grain, and very fair.

LIFE.

Our life is sleep, the world a dream,
To which there comes no wakening gleam,
And all is night.
But then at times we seem to be
About to wake and almost see,
We feel a breath around us blown
That whispers of a sea unknown,
And faintly hear the billows break—
We hear, we feel, but cannot wake.

AIR CASTLES.

Labor sweetest,
  Joy completest,
Building castles in the skies;
  Golden flighted,
  Astral lighted—
Some may fall, but others rise.

  Domes a-gleaming,
  Angles dreaming—
O those castles in the air!
  Fancy founded,
  Cloud enshrouded—
All my hope—my life is there!

PROMETHEUS VINCTUS.

Great Jove, dread tyrant of the universe!
Though chained by thee to this infernal rock,
And doomed to everlasting misery,
I do defy thee! Thou, 'tis true, hast power
To torture flesh, not to subdue the mind.
My love for man, it seems, has been my woe,
But shall this woe deter me from the right?
Shall I repent of what my mind approves,
And pray for mercy to abhorred Jove?
No, never! Add to woe a thousand woes,

And multiply my pain with agony,
I'll stand through all as firm, immovable,
As do these mountains 'gainst the rage of time!
Ye vultures, fiends that feed upon my heart,
Though swooning in a deathless agony,
Ye shall not see me wince, or hear me groan!—
Unconquered, though in chains, in that I have
A will to do, endure and not to yield.

TO LIBERTY.

O Liberty, what mighty deeds
  On battleground hast thou inspired!
How fell the servile Persian host
  When Grecian hearts by thee were fired!
How fought thy sons in latter years,
  In other lands beyond the sea,
When haughty Albion meet defeat,
  And lost a world through tyranny!

O Liberty, for thee thy sons
  Brave every danger, laugh at fear,
And love and fealty to thee
  The chain and bolt can sever ne'er!
When Tyranny has direful power
  To bind the hand, control the breath,
They rush into the battlefield,
  And find thee, Liberty, in death.

A SONG OF THE DESERT.

I am lord of myself wherever I ride,
I am lord of myself, and a thousand beside—
A master, but not by the tyranny of birth,
And one of the very few freemen on earth.

By the might of the sword, I'm a king as I ride
Where the desert spreads treeless and trackless and
wide;
I am king of the desert wherever I roam;
My sword is my sceptre, my steed is my throne.

The law is a tyrant that cowards obey,
And the church is the place for these cowards to pray:
The freedom of nations I scorn and defy;
'Tis a bait for the simple, a politic lie.

I am king for the freedom my proud spirit craves,
And am free by the power that makes other men slaves.
Though born in a hovel, I am mighty and free,
While the kings of the nations pay tribute to me.

THE INDIAN.

He lived happy and free from the bondage of grains,
Hunting in forests, hunting on plains,

Hunting the antelope, buck, doe and fawn;
But his hunting is over, the Indian has gone—
Gone with the bison, gone with the beaver,
Gone from the living, gone and forever.

WASTED TIME.

"I have no time to waste in making money,"
Said Agassiz. This is the top of wisdom,
A hidden truth known only to the wise
In soul. Time's beyond price, for time is life.
He only lives whose *soul* worketh in time;
All other life is sleep deeper than death:
Who sells his time for gold is traitor to
Himself, and dies a beggar in the end.

THE HERITAGE OF BLOOD.

The hist'ry of the human race
Is writ in blood from face to face,
From time to time, from age to age,—
'Tis writ in blood on every page.

Ay, from the morning of his birth,
Man's blood has soiled the virgin earth;
In every clime, in every land,
His blood has stained the pearly sand.

This awful heritage of blood
That sweeps the world with storm and flood,
It's beauty marred and life undone,
Descendeth on from sire to son.

TOLERATION.

Men's minds are cast in different mould,
And as the mind, the thoughts unfold:
A dreary world this surely'd be
If men in all things should agree.

Haste not thy brother to condemn,
Because you can't agree as men;
But grant to him that privilege due
That you would have him grant to you.

EVOLUTION.

The ages work in harmony,
The living with the dead;
And men whose bones have turned to dust
Help grind our daily bread.

The present, past and future are
Links in a single chain,

That reach from what we were and are,
To what we would attain.

IMITATION.

Man's duty is to know himself,
And then to be himself alone;
For every mind, however dull,
May claim some virtue as its own.

Leave imitation to the ape,
The dummy and the manikin,
And be thyself, thyself alone,
For less than this were less than man.

WILL.

To moral wound and cry for aid,
My friends were blind and deaf:
I sought through all the world for God,
And found him in myself.

THE GOLDEN AGE.

Weary, dissatisfied, we let
To-day slip into yester-year,

While dreaming o'er, and sighing for,
The good old times that never were.

Alas, alas! it is our fate
To learn at last, but learn too late,
That life is now, that life is here,
Within the present and the near.

THE DRUNKARD.

The drunkard drinks to slake a quenchless thirst;
He drinks his family out of house and land,
And still he drinks, with fiery torture curst—
Drinks death, with feverish lips and trembling hand.

The thing that he was born for, he shall miss;
Remorse shall dog him sober; drunk, the idiot laugh;
Around his death-bed snakes shall curl and hiss;
A single *If* shall be his epitaph.

THE MISER.

His soul is dead, his heart is cold,
His life is spent in getting gold;
And getting's never satisfied,
For greed can never be supplied.

His ears are deaf to hunger's cry,
The poor may weep, the famished die—

He only hears the clink of gold,
And clutches with a tighter hold.

His eyes are blind to all distress,
To faded cheek and tattered dress—
He only sees his glittering gold,
And clutches with a tighter hold.

His greed for gold grows with the years,
Dried up the man, the ape appears;
And when he sleeps, of gold he dreams,
And when he awakes, with gold he schemes.

With gold he measures man as dross,
And love and virtue as a loss;
He sees the world through yellow gold;
His soul is dead, his heart is cold.

And when this thing shall come to die,
No man will mourn, no woman cry;
And then begins a tale that's old,—
To break his will and get his gold.

ON LEAVING THE CITY IN THE SPRING.

There is comfort in the city
When the fields are dead and blown;

But I would not gaze forever
On a pile of brick and stone.

Smoke forever hangs above it,
Like a portent in the sky,
And where'er it throws its shadow
Trees and flowers fade and die.

Country air is the best tonic
For the city-weary soul,—
Rock and river, field and forest,
And the forces that control.

THE SONNET.

The sonnet is an artificial mould,
Where soul is crushed, and form alone survives;
'Tis a Procrustean bed where genius lies
Mangled by barbarous art, and cold
In death; 'tis as if folk of different mould
Should all wear garments of a single size;
It is a curb that genius doth despise,
A snaffle-bit for Pegasus, to hold
Him from the skies; 'tis like—but I will stay
Comparison, lest some offended be:
Remembering Keats and Milton, I'll unsay
What I have said,—adding, 'tis not for me

To work in sonnets, though a Shakespeare may,
With which I know my reader will agree.

MISS MODERNA.

She is a maiden mathematical,
A prim and prosy maiden with a purse,
Who prides herself on being practical,
And thinks to be a man by being coarse.

She calmly, coldly lives by rule and line,
And does not love beyond her reason; an',
Argues for woman's rights, and proves, in fine,
The rights of woman tread on those of man.

From long presiding over household cares,
It seems that she has learned to rule the state;
And when she marries, through her own affairs,
Will prove that woman's greater than her fate.

She'll marry a man as weak as she is strong,
Whom she can rule and peck through life;
And who will slink around the worldly throng,
Distinguished as the husband of his wife.

Though thus to live can surely be no harm,
Methinks that it were done but foolishly;
For everybody knows the natural charm,
Of woman is her feminimity.

A SONG OF THE WEST.

Ho for the life that is strenuous!
  Ho for the mart and the street!
We will wear our lives down to a frazzle;
  We will burn our lives out at white heat.

We have learned that in death there's no waking,
  So in life there shall be no sleep:
We will live life out in the living,
  And in death have nothing to weep.

Our life is no sluggish river
  That stagnates in marsh or on lea,
But a mountain torrent that headlong
  Goes thundering down to the sea.

Then ho for the life in the New World!
  Then ho for the life on wheels!
That waits not, but goes rushing to meet the
  Future, with welcoming peals.

To farm and factory, to carriage and car,
  We have chained the God of the Thunder Showers,
And gone whirling beyond the dreams of the past,
  While the seconds and minutes are growing to hours.

IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

All great things come from the mountains—religion —poetry. (Poetry came from Mount Parnassus; the Hebrew religion from Mount Sinai; the Greek, from Mount Olympus; the Christian, from the Sermon on the Mount.)

In the green, sheltered valleys below life may run into graceful, undulating rhyme; but we must go to the mountains for the sublime. Mountains are like the blank verse of Milton, without ornament or affectation, free and barren, grand and terrible.

Here the rivers roar into torrents and break into cataracts. Here the earth is uplifted, and torn by convulsions into a thousand ridges and chasms, against which the thundering clouds are hurled in storm and snow and sleet.

Land of the mountain! how shall I name thee,
When for what thou art not the many defame thee!
All wrinkled and broken and twisted in pain,
With thy winters of snow and thy summers of rain.

Land of the mountain! how dearly I love thee,
With the white snow upon thee and the blue sky above
thee!
And my wish is to live here and die here forever,
In thy vastness, loneliness, grandeur and terror!

Land of the hills and a thousand streams,
Of silver and gold and palpable dreams!
Where the slender aspen stands and quivers
On the stony banks of the thundering rivers.

Here man must live with all his might
To live at all: the western wight
Has coined himself in one word, *rustle*.
The rock's resistance nerves his muscle,
It fires his blood and clears his brain;
And looking on the world below,
While soul is thrilled and all aglow
With music wild from torrents whirled,
His thoughts expand and fill the world.

Here life is harsh and crude and strong,
But free from memory of wrong.
The West is young, its blood is pure,
Its history is all before.

THE PROSPECTOR.

With heavy feet, he travels far
  On trackless journeys lone,
Seeking the treasure of the hills,
  Fast-locked in vaults of stone.

We spend our daily life for daily ends,
  By the horizon bound,
While he goes forth to seek his dreams
  In a wide world, and round.

THE COLUMBINE.

She lives in lonely, high mountain glens,
Aerial, lucid, unpampered by men,
  Queen flower of the mountains, the columbine;
And breathes the delicate air of summer,
  Cooled by the snow-caps, fragrant with pine.

She has stood on the banks, and heard in a dream,
Through countless summers, the rush of the stream
  O'er rocks that protrude and confine,
Till the soul of the rock and the river
  Blooms in the columbine.

ON THE MOUNTAIN.

My friend lives in a lone, log cabin,
  Far up the falling mountain stream;
And where the spacious river valley
  Has narrowed into a ravine.

He loves to feel the sense of freedom
  The unmolested wildness gives:
He loves to breathe the breath of heaven,
  And quaff the nectar of the hills.

He took me to the top of mountains
  All bathed in light and swathed in shrouds:
We went into the azure heaven,
  And left the world beneath the clouds.

We left the pine trees dwarfed and stunted,—
  Saw greenest fields of grass that grow,
And little vivid, vermeil blossoms
  That nod their heads against the snow.

Then climbed beyond to barren grandeur,
  And viewed a world wind-swept and free,
Streams flowing from eternal snow-banks,
  The far-off fountains of the sea.

But when the mountain broke abruptly,
We stopped and shuddered—backward fell;
And in those high, ethereal heavens
We clung, and peered down into hell.

We felt the mountain's Sinai secret
Through all our beings bound and throb:
We stood with Moses on the mountain,
And looked upon the face of God.

WRITTEN IN A DESERTED MINING CAMP.

Here once the ringing sound of steel,
The thunder blast, the whirl of wheel,
Awoke an echo in the hills
That sounded louder than its rills;
But that is past—gone like a dream,
And silent all save bird and stream:
No more the noise of eager men
Disturbs the quit of the glen.

On every hill and mountain side
The fondest hopes have lived and died.
A watery shaft deep in the ground,
With broken rock piled high around,
Doth mark the toil that Hope once gave,
And also marks that Hope's sad grave.

This building was a live saloon,
A brothel and a gambling room,
Where men drank deep, played wild and lost—
Acted the fool at bitter cost:
But all are gone and scattered far—
A squirrel is sitting on the bar.

The town's as silent as the grave,
And grass is growing on the pave.
The houses are deserted all,
Save for the rat within the wall;
Like grinning skeletons they stand
(The boards are warped and weather-tanned);
And when the world is lost to light,
And clouds and rain usurp the night,
Through broken windows, open doors,
The wind, it whistles and it roars.

SPRING IN THE MOUNTAINS.

The sun is coming North again
To bring the summer back:
A smiling, verdant, flowery train
Is dancing in her track.

The snow that all the winter long
Has lain upon the hills,

Now disappears with gurgling song
In numerous little rills.

The magpie chatters loud and long,
A sort of Runic lay:
The bluebird flies the pines among,
And carols all the day.

The chipmunk full of lightsome glee,
With almost lightning speed,
Now dartles down a fallen tree,
Or nibbles at a weed.

His outfit the prospector binds
Upon his patient jack,
To seek the gold he never finds,
In mountains farther back.

DENVER.

Denver has her royal seat
Where the plain and mountains meet
In the Halls of Even;
At the top of earthly cares,
And the foot of golden stairs
Leading up to heaven.

"THOU SOVEREIGN PEAK OF THE MOUNTAINS."

Thou sovereign peak of the mountains,
  Towering up in the sky,
In calm sublimity standing
  While the storms of the ages roll by!—

O had I but thy endurance
  While I stand in the world alone,
No complaint should ever escape me,
  But alas! my heart is not stone.

PART II.

CONCENTRATES.

There are only two things in life worth while—love and liberty.

All the world's beauty is born of its love.

Hope is the lance of daring youth,
A staff the old man leans upon.

Knowledge is our greatest enemy—it drove us from Eden and keeps us from Heaven.

Good and evil are male and female, and their product is the sum of the universe.

"Know thyself," says the old adage; but man will never know himself until he can see humanity outside the human.

Religion is the poetry of the vulgar—doggerel. Poetry is the religion of the cultivated few—of the artistic soul.

I can't belive the God that made the lily and the rose will damn his children to eternal fire.

Sorrow is universal, eternal and infinite. What best distinguishes man from the brute creation is his greater capacity for suffering. Sorrow is the sympathetic nerve of humanity.

Pain is the mother of the senses.

Everybody is a fool to somebody.

It is well for woman to be able to help herself, but bad for her to have to help herself.

When a good woman cannot save a man,
No power on earth, in hell or heaven, can.

A man marries his love: a woman marries her lover.

A woman in politics is like a man in petticoats—lost.

In a well regulated government, the radical evolves the law and the conservative applies it.

Civilization did not come from following precedents, but by breaking them.

The philosophers and reformers have lived in vain.

Man cannot be helped against his will. As long as life is life, and man is man, so long will there be misery and oppression. Why then weep foolish tears and build impossible Utopias, when evil is a necessity and perfection an absurdity?

Put an angel on the earth, and he would starve to death; turn the devil loose, and he would live on the fat of the land.

Work that is not its own inspiration and recompense is mere drudgery, and drudgery is—damnation.

Wealth means liberty: servitude is slavery. There can be no liberty without equality; there can be no freedom without independence.

If Labor were as wise as he is powerful, he would rule the world. He is a sleeping giant. He is another Sampson, blind and bound, and grinding corn for the Philistines; but woe to the Philistines in that day when he shall awaken to the knowledge of his strength! A giant is a dangerous servant.

The boss is the lash of the capitalist made from the laborer's own hide.

The standard of *labor* is the mule, and the nearer a man attains to this standard, both in brain and brawn, the better laborer he makes.

Men are divided into two classes, fools and rascals: the fools do the work and the rascals do the *rest*.

When a man steals enough to become respectable, all the world cringes at his feet in jealous admiration.

An ideal that can be realized is no ideal.

We make our own temptations: drink is no temptation to the man that never drank.

Most good people are merely good because they do nothing bad.

Contentment is a happiness
Known only to the dunce.

Reason is conscious instinct.

Blood cannot be washed out with blood.

There was never a hungry optimist.

The greatest things in life are done without trying.

The creation of man is the greatest failure on record.

Many authors write whole books to express a thought that could be put into a single sentence. They can-

not concentrate thought till it scintillates like the diamond, but spill themselves in quartos and folios, as weak as water, as thin as air.

THE SUPERNATURAL.

A belief in the supernatural presupposes a nature outside of Nature,—that Nature is not creative and sufficient unto itself, but inert, mechanical, dead, and impossible without an outside and greater nature.

Man lives too near God to recognize and reverence Him, and so runs after false gods.

Earth is merely earth to those that live upon it: ten thousand miles away it is a brilliant star.

WALT WHITMAN.

I.

If you want to know what Adam was like, read Walt Whitman. Here is the first man God ever made, the primal man, Adam, before saddened with the knowledge of good and evil, fresh and glowing from the hand of God, and drunk with the glory of the morning of creation, shouting and dancing in physical ecstasy.

Here is the epithalamium that Adam sung at his nuptials in the Garden of Eden.

It is all prose poetry: poetic prose came after the fall.

He was born before clothes were made, and he never learned how to wear them.

II.

He embodies the spirit of Democracy—not religion, but religions; not man, but men.

He not only speaks for Liberty, but unshackled from rhyme and meter, he speaks the language of Liberty.

He is no singer of bric-a-brac and broken china, but a serious soul dealing in eternals and ultimates.

RACE SUICIDE.

The birth rate of a people is in inverse ratio to their intelligence.

The more man thinks, the less he breeds: the higher the organism, the greater the suffering.

Man finds himself suddenly awakened from a world-long sleep to a consciousness of his miserable and irremediable fate, and with a blind impulse to endure other matter with like consciousness; but as his consciousness becomes more conscious, and his suffering more acute, the less his inclination to perpetuate himself, by becoming a link in an endless chain of human misery. Thus man is ever advancing toward Nirvana, the ultimate triumph of intellect over instinct.

Man sleeps and dreams on the edge of a frightful precipice, and to awake is death.

THE AWAKENING.

In the half-awakened dawn, through the glamour of youth, the earth lay before me as a vast pleasure-ground, full of wonder and magic, and life seemed a succession of holidays. And Love in the form of a beautiful woman, smiled on me in the streets and beckoned to me from the vine-covered casements.

But it came to pass that the Spirit of Evil appeared unto me, and touching me lightly on the eyelids, said, "Awake! and behold thy dreams." And lo! the earth was changed to a monstrous arena, filled with all manner of life, fighting, killing and devouring one another in a blind struggle for existence.

And the Spirit continued: "Thou dreamest of love: come, and I will show thee thy posterity." And we went down narrow, ill-smelling streets, crowded with children—the children of the poor—springing up in filth and want to crime and shame: and pointing he said, "This, and this, and this, is thy child." Then we came to a prostitute, and he said, "'Behold thy daughter with her mother's eyes!' Strange men come to her through the dark alleys of the night, and leave her at dawn wan and wasted, and burnt through as with flame." He took me to hospitals, insane asy-

lums, jails and penitentiaries: and he found my children there also—the diseased, the maniac and the criminal.

And weeping, I said, "Surely, they are not all here; surely, there are many that are healthy, prosperous and happy."

He answered: "They are not all here—they fill all the avenues of life; they are not all here, but they are all—miserable. But admitting that some are happy, can pleasure balance pain? How many lives of the fortunately happy can compensate for one life of suffering? How many Websters does it take to balance an imbecile or an impotent? Sorrow is dead-heavy, and outweighs a thousand pleasures."

After a long silence of tears, I ventured: "But after all, is not life more than pain and pleasure? Is not 'man greater than his fate,' as shadowed forth in his religion?"

The Spirit answered: "The saddest thing about man is his religion—a hope born of despair, the feverish dream of the sorrow-stricken and heart-broken, the childish babble of the defeated will."

"This may be true of Christianity and kindred religions," I said, "for Christianity is the apotheosis of the ego, the religion of the individual; but is not the growing conception of the fundamental law of Nature, evolution, about to replace it with a greater, grander, broader religion—the religion of humanity; when, know-

ing the immortality of *the* soul, we shall no longer be concerned about the immortality of *my* soul or *thy* soul? Shall we not be purified and made new through renunciation and complete surrender to the All, which is God? As man has come up from the brute, shall he not continue to ascend—go on to God? Can we not build through evolution a ladder that shall reach from earth to heaven?"

The Spirit answered: "God is in first as in last, in least as in greatest, and heaven is here as there. Earth may take different shapes, and pass through various stages, but earth can never be other than earth."

And he pointed, and said, "Behold evolution!" And I saw a ladder that reached from the lowest valley to the highest summit, but no higher, and man slowly and painfully climbing upward through countless ages, only to tumble headlong down in the end.

And in anguish of soul, I cried, "Sisyphus! Sisyphus!"

And the Spirit echoed, "Sisyphus, ay, ay, Sisyphus. The old world myth of the punishment of Sisyphus is a perfect allegory of the fate of mankind.

> 'With many a weary step and many a groan,
> Up a high hill he heaves a huge round stone;
> The huge round stone resulting with a bound,
> Thunders impetuous down and smokes along the ground.'"

"I have yet one escape," I cried: "I will go and drown myself in death."

And still the Spirit answered: "There is no death, as you yourself only just now maintained. What men call death is merely change; for buried, you will crawl in the worm and grow in the grass, and thus tediously and painfully begin all over again, as you have undoubtedly done a thousand times before."

Alas, that we cannot die! Alas and alas! and forever and ever, alas!

'Zounds, sir, you're robbed; for shame, put on your gown;
Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul;
Even now, now, very now, and old black ram
Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise!
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,
Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you:
Arise! I say.—Othello.

ADVANCE SHEETS FROM AN UNITED STATES HISTORICAL WORK, A. D. 2900.

About the last of August [1619] came in a Dutch man-of-war that sold us 20 Negars.—*Records of Virginia Colony.*

How little the agents in this transaction knew, or the clerk that recorded it, that it marked the beginning of a new era in the world's history! that it would eventually stand in the same relation to America that the invasion of the Normans under William the Conqueror does to England! How little they knew that in the name of slave they were buying wives and husbands for their sons and daughters! Yet such was the case. It is here that the black man first enters upon the historical stage, and begins to play his part in the drama of civilization.

* * * *

It was generally believed in the nineteenth century that the Civil War had settled the Negro problem, and it was not until the middle of the next century that it

was first realized that it had not begun to be settled. It entered politics, and for centuries was almost the sole issue, and party after party tried its solution in vain. It seems almost incredible, that, with the history of previous and neighboring nations under similar conditions accessible to all, no one seemed to be aware that no race problem was ever settled except by the extinction of a race or the races.

* * * *

The public schools of the North were probably one of the greatest factors in the amalgamation of the races. We give the following adaptation of Pope's famous lines, which were often quoted at one time by the Lily Whites in support of their contention that the rearing of black and white children in the school room on terms of equality would inevitably bring them into closer relations:

"The Negro is a monster of such frightful mien,
That to be hated, needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with the face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

But the greatest factor was the Negro himself, for he quickly adapted himself to his place in civilization, and in working out his industrial redemption also worked out his social redemption.

The equal laws and friendly attitude of the North and West were a great attraction to the Southern Negro, and a steady immigration set in about the twentieth century, and soon reached enormous proportions. The Negro's place in the South was taken by the European immigrant, who now turned from the North and West to the South; and thus the mixing process became equalized.

Philadelphia being the most Southern of the Northern cities, became the Mecca of the Negro. Away back at the beginning of the twentieth century, whenever a Negro found a white sweetheart in the adjoining Southern states, he took her to Philadelphia, where they could be lawfully married and live in peace and security. The mixed races clung together, and by the following century inhabited a large section of the city. At length, this condition of affairs created great alarm, and the marriage laws were repealed, only to be re-instated at a later period.

* * * *

The Whites looked down upon the Blacks as their inferiors, and the Blacks looked up to the Whites as their superiors; and so it happened, that when a Negro man took a white woman to himself, he made her his wife, but when a White man took a Negro woman, he made her his mistress. With the Negro it was always

"Barkis' willin'"; indeed, he was not only willing, but eager, to mix.

This idea of the superiority of the White race still lingers after the amalgamation of the races, and shows itself in the way in which we seek to ignore our Negro ancestry. When the European press only lately indicated the Negro in our blood by the bar sinister across our shield, did we not secretly writhe within, and cry out, "We are more white than black," till all Europe rang with its laughter?

The Negro has disappeared, but the word is still used as a term of reproach.

* * * *

For a thorough understanding of the Negro character before it had begun to merge into the White, we refer the student to that formative period of American literature commonly known as the *Coon Literature Period*, or the *Coon Age*, which begun soon after the Emancipation, and grew into great magnitude in the following century.

Coon literature properly begins with Joel Chandler Harris and Frank L. Stanton. Although Frank L. Stanton was not a Negro,* he seems to have been thoroughly imbued with the Negro sentiment, and has given us a sympathetic interpretation of the Negro char-

* Authorities differ about this. See *Curiosities of American Literature.*

acter in his poems, most of which are jubilee songs, with a hallelujah chorus, to be played on a banjo. Thus it will be seen that the predominating trait of the Negro was his unfailing cheerfulness. Indeed, it may be said of him as Logan sung of the Cuckoo:

"There was no sorrow in this song,
Nor winter in his year."

* * * *

The race prejudice of the white man was originally so strong that if, at the close of the Civil War, he could have foreseen how his descendants would settle the race problem he was about to bequeath them, he would undoubtedly have settled it himself, then and there, by dispatching the Negro back to Africa. But this question of deporting the Negro was never seriously considered until he had entered the skilled trades in competition with White labor, which caused much bitterness and some bloodshed; but it was then too late —the Mulatto population alone then numbered nearly 12,000,000.

Man never provides for the future; he never grapples with an evil until it has him in its toils.

* * * *

We have been the subject of much criticism by Europeans, who claim that we have deterioated,—that we are no longer a progressive and inventive people.

But the unprejudiced observer must admit that this criticism is unfair and premature. After the union of two such widely diverging types of the human family, it is only natural to expect a period of hesitation and inactivity. We must be given time to form character and to find ourselves.

And further, it can be said that if we have lost in some ways, we have undoubtedly gained in others. No one can deny, for instance, that we have gained in spiritual religion. The simple child-like faith of the black man has settled the rising doubts of the white, and America is still a Christian country, while all Europe has long since bowed down to the false gods of modern science.

* * * *

In looking backward from the vantage-ground of time, we can see that the so-called Negro problem was purely racial,—as much white as black,—and so long as the two races lived together could only be settled by miscegenation. But the dominant Whites persisted to the end in treating it as economical; and so drove it forward to a conclusion like the man did the mule—by pulling it back by the tail. The world moves by indirection. We live, by doing something else.

* * * *

With the reserved, morose temperament of the Ger-

manic strain has been happily blended the impulsive, cheerful temperament of the Negro; the sharp Anglo-Saxon face has been softened by the flat, mobile features of the African; and to the cold-paleness and somber sadness of the North has been added the warm tints, the *abandon* and luxuriance of the tropic.

The union of these two races has given us the most beautiful women in the world, with rich, wavy hair, and cheeks like russet apples tinged with red.

"What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder;" and no man can.

When you behold the last of me
Go by in pall and bier,
Go write the one word *Misery*,
Then blot it with a tear.

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